

MONTANA

Even more than other Westerners, Montanans rate the environment and outdoor lifestyle as top reasons they live in Big Sky Country. Residents visit public lands regularly and want to see them managed to ensure recreation access and preservation for future generations.

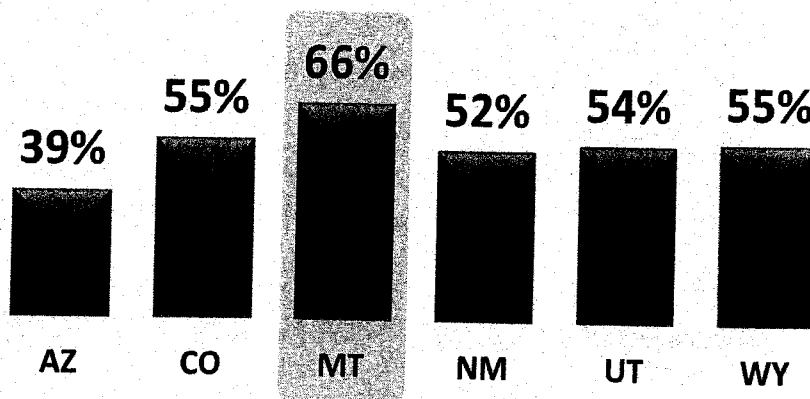
“ I love the outdoors. I go hunting and hiking. I go hiking and camping. I love all the outdoor and openness of the country area. ”

“ A nice place to raise a family, outdoor recreation, and a clean environment. ”

Montanans rate outdoor recreation and tourism as highly important to their state's economy, though below farming and ranching and health care.

But for their own decision about where to live, nothing is more important than a clean environment and the healthy outdoor lifestyle it allows. Two-thirds say the ability to recreate on public lands was a significant factor in their decision to live where they do – a full eleven percentage points above any other state. No other factor comes close to being as important to Montanans, including economic opportunities, schools, or the cost of living.

Recreation on Public Lands By State



■ Significant Factor

In keeping with the importance they place on these aspects of life in Montana, fully 96% say they have visited public lands managed by U.S. agencies in the last year, and over four in ten have been more than twenty times.

Visit Public Lands	More than 20 Times	6-20 Times	1-5 Times	Never
Overall	24%	34%	37%	5%
Montana	43%	29%	23%	4%

A majority sees these public lands as American places belonging to everyone in the nation (58%), while a third sees them as belonging more to the people of Montana (35%).



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Conservation in the West Poll



Their priority for managing these places is more recreation-focused than in some other states: ensuring access for recreational activities and conserving areas for future generations are their most important priorities.

Priorities for Public Lands Ranked By Very Important	Very Important	Total Important
Ensuring access for recreational activities such as hiking, biking, hunting and fishing	78%	96%
Protecting and conserving natural areas for future generations	77%	96%
Protecting and conserving wildlife habitat	70%	96%
Making sure that rangers have the resources they need to take care of public lands and provide services to visitors	64%	91%
Making sure resources such as oil and gas, minerals or coal are available for development and mining	46%	77%
Making them available for livestock grazing	39%	78%

Protecting and conserving wildlife is also an important priority for Montanans when it comes to public lands (70% very important). This is reflected in their support for the Bureau of Land Management establishing strong protections in sage grouse habitat, including limiting some energy development, grazing and off-road vehicle use (59% support, 34% oppose).

Making sure rangers have the proper resources is also important to the state's electorate (64% very important), and they are inclined to think this is not happening as it should be. Over six in ten (63%) say lack of resources to properly maintain and care for these U.S. lands is a serious problem.






Montanans have clear hopes for the new Congress when it comes to conservation.

They offer strong support for continued investments in renewable energy, continuing to use oil and gas fees for conservation, and maintaining the presidential power to designate national monuments, while they are unified in rejecting the sale of public lands.

Congressional Actions Ranked By Support

	Support	Oppose
Continue to use some of the money from fees charged to oil and gas companies that drill offshore for conservation of natural areas and clean water, and to ensure access to outdoor recreation	75%	8%
Future Presidents continuing to protect existing public lands as national monuments	73%	17%
Continue taxpayer support for solar and wind energy production	59%	29%
Sell significant holdings of public lands like national forests to reduce the budget deficit	17%	72%

What's Unique About Montana?

	The environment and lifestyle are far more important to Montanans than to other states in driving where they live: healthy, outdoor lifestyle (73% significant factor), clean environment (73%), public lands (66%), and hunting and fishing (51%) are all the highest of any state	
	78%	Highest of any state – say ensuring access for recreation is a very important priority for public lands
	93%	Highest of any state – see farming and ranching as one of the most or very important to their state's economy. However, managing public lands for these purposes is a lower priority for Montanans than recreation, wildlife protection, or conservation for future generations.